

share the satisfaction of international observers that the election infrastructure, both legal and technical, has been greatly improved."

Mr. Speaker, I join in sharing the pride of our embassy and the contributions we have helped make in advancing the course of democracy and the rule of law in Armenia. These results are the best evidence to date that our assistance to this fledgling Republic is indeed serving its intended purpose. Our shared values and the strong bonds between the United States and Armenia will no doubt continue to expand. In doing so, we will continue to foster democracy in Armenia and work towards stability in the South Caucasus region.

Earlier this year, dozens of my colleagues joined me in sending a letter to the chairman of the House State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee calling for \$75 million in assistance for Armenia in fiscal year 2008. As the appropriation process continues, I'd like to remind my colleagues of this request and renew it again today. This assistance demonstrates our commitment to Armenia, which is a friend and a supporter of U.S. policies for peace and security in that part of the world.

Armenia's achievement also addresses concerns expressed by the Millennium Challenge Corporation with respect to these elections. Armenia has met the necessary threshold, and I'm confident that the people and the Government of Armenia will only continue to improve upon their accomplishments in achieving the standards and norms of a democratic society. And accordingly, I urge the MCC to fully fund its compact with Armenia in an expeditious manner.

These elections are an historic step towards a fully democratic Armenia, a goal to which the nation has demonstrated its commitment and leadership in the region through democratic reform. I congratulate the people of Armenia for this remarkable accomplishment.

I would also like to enter into the RECORD a letter I sent with Congressman KNOLLENBERG marking this achievement.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, May 18, 2007.

Hon. SERZH SARGSYAN,
Prime Minister, The Armenian Embassy, Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT KOCHARIAN,
President, The Armenian Embassy, Washington, DC.

DEAR PRIME MINISTER SARGSYAN AND PRESIDENT KOCHARIAN: We write to congratulate you both on the success of the May 12th Parliamentary elections in Armenia. The success of this free and fair election cycle reflects the great progress made by Armenia in recent years to move further away from its Soviet past and towards a flourishing democracy.

The importance of this round of elections was well-understood and carried out honorably by your government. We appreciate Armenia's willingness to work with the U.S. government to ensure the elections were indeed free and fair. Your hard work and dedi-

cation has led to the citizens of your country following the lead of their government officials in operating in a free and democratic way to elect a new Parliament.

We look forward to our continued work with you to advance the Armenian and Armenian-American agenda in the U.S. Congress.

Sincerely,

JOE KNOLLENBERG,
FRANK PALLONE, JR.,
Members of Congress.

NEW VERSION OF NAFTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Congress is now faced with a so-called new trade policy with regard to Peru, Panama, Colombia and South Korea. But this deal is not a new direction for trade; it's a variation of the same old theme.

We have seen how NAFTA has sucked a million good jobs out of our country and ruined millions of lives in Mexico and driven so many desperate illegal immigrants across our border. We have seen how so-called free trade with a closed and manipulative China has led to soaring deficits, increasing outsourcing of our jobs, and lax labor and environmental standards not just in Asia, but around the world in a race to the bottom. Tainted Chinese food is not just being sent here for our pets, but for our people.

The trade policy released last week does not make any major changes to this trade regimen. It does not aim at yielding a more balanced set of trade accounts for our country, or even opening the closed markets of the world. It doesn't fix agreements that aren't working to our advantage or even to be fair to both sides. There is nothing in this deal about the privatization of public works, for example, in water or in sanitation or health care that are inherent in what has been negotiated. If Democrats oppose privatizing Social Security here in the United States, why would we require privatizing the Peruvian social security system? Now, why would we do that?

This NAFTA replica presents a non-binding list of requests that has the illusion of enforceability, but sacrifices more of our middle class to global investors.

In fact, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has said it supports this rehashed agenda because of, and I quote, assurances that the labor provisions cannot be read to comply with ILO conventions.

These repackaged NAFTA agreements do not reflect a desire for a new trade model that many Members of Congress and vast majorities of the American people expect. And I am truly saddened that those who have cobbled these deals together make light of the people of our country and other countries who have been so deeply hurt by these agreements, by denying them a seat at the tables of testi-

mony in this very Congress. In fact, their methods are most undemocratic.

Last March NBC and the Wall Street Journal conducted a poll asking the American people, do you think free trade agreements between the United States and foreign countries have helped the United States, have hurt the United States or have not made much of a difference? Forty-six percent of respondents answered U.S. trade agreements have hurt this country. Only 28 responded, half as many, said they have helped.

The American people want free trade among free people, and they want a trade policy that encourages U.S. economic growth and job creation here at home.

It is irresponsible to continue to reword the same agreements and expect that our constituents are naive enough to accept it as real change.

A new trade policy must respect the dignity of work, the rule of law, the equality of sexes, the nobility of the environment and the value of the person.

We cannot continue to stand for trade policies, binding or not, that degrade the value of the working class and cost money, jobs and lives as we see in the wake of NAFTA and in all of the trade agreements that mirrored it.

Our constituents realize that our current trade policy is more harmful than helpful. And before we encourage the remaking of NAFTA for Peru, Colombia, Panama, South Korea, we need to revisit U.S. trade policy and make comprehensive changes. We cannot extend fast track until we fix what is wrong with existing agreements that yield these job hemorrhages.

I applaud those of our distinguished colleagues who are here this evening who are working very hard to change this trade model to make it thorough, to make it fair, to make it a balanced situation for the people of our country, and to treat the people of the Third World with respect.

I look forward to participating in genuinely reshaping the future of international trade to reshape jobs being created here at home and the economic policies that are so vital to the future for our people in order that they can move into the middle class again, rather than falling out. We have a long way to go.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)